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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2003

THIS REPORT WILL PRESENT A TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER
THREE THEMES:

HEADLINES
BRIEFING
EDITORIAL OPINION

HEADLINES

MASS APPEALS

Saddam, from throne to cage - Turkiye
Saddam collaborates with US to save his life - IGC member -
Turkiye
Saddam kept in Baghdad - Milliyet
Iron Horse hunts resisters - Milliyet
'Good morning Baghdad' - Robin Williams in Iraq - Aksam
Verheugen: Real Turkish Cypriots want EU - Milliyet
Traffic intensifies between Ankara and Lefkosa - Sabah
Denktas signals he might withdraw as negotiator - Aksam

OPINION MAKERS

Bush wants heaviest possible punishment for Saddam -
Cumhuriyet
Resistance continues in Iraq - Cumhuriyet
Post-Saddam violence in Iraq - Radikal
Talat: Denktas cannot remain as negotiator - Zaman
Ankara against new elections, prefers broad coalition in
TRNC - Radikal
Eroglu, Denktas to continue cooperation - Radikal
Madonna prefers Wesley Clark as president - Radikal
Heavy penalties for November 17 terrorists - Radikal

BRIEFING

Cyprus: Turkish Cypriot leader Denktas met on Wednesday with the leaders of political parties represented in parliament - the CTP, UBP, DP and BDH. Denktas reiterated the need for a national unity government, and said that he would not insist on being the chief negotiator in Cyprus talks. CTP leader Talat is not against a national coalition government, and said his party could consider a coalition with the UBP as well. Outgoing coalition leader UBP's Eroglu has also abandoned his hard line stance, and said his party would consider forming a partnership with the CTP. "Turkiye" reports the comments of US Congressman Mark Kirk, who said that the US would prefer that Talat form the new government. US Special Cyprus Coordinator Thomas Weston met with Talat in Lefkosa on Wednesday. The US has stepped in before Turkey, writes "Hurriyet," drawing attention to Weston's rush to the island without waiting for the new government to be formed. The MFA said Ankara would continue to cooperate with any new Turkish Cypriot government. Ankara has been using the Annan Plan as its main point of reference for a new Cyprus peace proposal to be unveiled soon, claims "Zaman." The MFA is reluctant to discuss its new plan with Weston, who will be visiting Ankara Friday. The new plan by Turkey will offer a timetable for solving disagreements on key issues like guarantor status, reduction of troops, and migration.

US offers Turkey free trade deal: US Congressman Mark Kirk said the US could offer to sign a free trade agreement with Turkey if progress is seen in efforts toward a Cyprus settlement. A new free trade agreement between the US and Turkey will strengthen the position of Ankara in its relations with the EU, Kirk said. Kirk said that the pro-EU CTP leader, Mehmet Ali Talat, should be designated as prime minister in the TRNC. New bill for restructuring the NSC: A bill for establishing transparency in the structure of the National Security Council (NSC) has been submitted to the Council of Ministers

for approval, "Hurriyet" reports. The draft abolishes some units of the NSC such as the offices for intelligence gathering and collective civil defense. The NSC Secretary General will be held accountable for spending from slush funds, "Hurriyet" notes.

EDITORIAL OPINION: Iraq

"James Baker Makes a Difference"
Fikret Ertan noted in the Islamist-intellectual Zaman (12/18): "In the effort to rebuild Iraq, it is crucially important that Iraq's colossal foreign debt is either erased or restructured with a reasonable repayment plan. This issue is as vital as the security and stability of Iraq. Failure to find a settlement to the debt issue will mean that Iraq will suffer from lack of investment and will not be able to attract foreign capital. In the end, these factors would lead to more serious problems with security and stability. . Thus the Bush administration's recent decision to appoint James Baker to deal with Iraq's debts is not only a very important step but also very appropriate. Baker, who is just the right name for this job, has already made progress by reaching consensus with French and German leaders for the elimination of some Iraqi debt. . It is also expected that Baker will exert his personal charisma in talks with the Russians and will eventually convince Moscow, which has so far been cool to the debt reduction argument."

"The Unholy War"
Derya Sazak commented in mass appeal Milliyet (12/18): "Events following the capture of Saddam strongly indicate that attacks against the occupation forces will continue. The Bush administration has managed to make progress in ending dictatorial regimes in Afghanistan and Iraq, and that might be a good outcome. Yet there are no gains from the strategy of preventive war. The general picture does not convince us that the intention of the war was to prevent terror. There is a complex set of reasons ranging from the fight against terrorism to oil and other issues that motivated the US. It is also puzzling to see that Saddam has been captured while Bin Laden remains on the loose. . Saddam's capture has not ended the violence. This is the very time for the US administration to start making a fair analysis of the Iraq situation in the post-Saddam era. Saddam is out of the game, but the 'September 11 process' still requires further explanation."

EDELMAN